

Why should I apply for a building permit?

A building permit is a license that grants legal permission to start construction of a building project. Permits allow the enforcement of the codes that have been adopted as law by the State of California. They enable the building officials to ensure that the design and construction meets **minimum** code requirements and that the appropriate materials are used.

When do I need a building permit?

In general, any work which alters your structure requires a permit. Work exempt from a building permit is identified in the California Building Code as adopted by the Municipal Code ([CMC 18.04.015](#)). You are always welcome to [contact us](#) for an answer regarding your specific project.

What kind of plans do I need to obtain a building permit?

In addition to a Building Permit Application, 2 to 3 sets of plans will be required for the review of your proposed construction. For a more detailed description of what you will need to provide we suggest you read either the [Residential Construction](#) or [Tenant Improvement](#) handout.

How much does a building permit cost?

Just as the size and type of work being done varies, the cost for each permit will depend on the time needed to check the plans and do the inspections during construction. An estimate can be provided to you by the building counter staff by calling (760) 602-2717 / 2718 / 2719.

Who may apply for a building permit?

Property owners, state licensed contractors or their authorized agents may apply for a building permit. Contractors must provide a Certificate of Workers Compensation Insurance and have a current City of Carlsbad business license. ([Apply for business license](#))

How long does it take for my plans to be approved by the Building Dept.?

Except for minor work permits that can be issued over the counter, the initial plan check takes 10-15 working days. Resubmittals take approximately 5-8 working days.

How do I check the status of my Plan Check?

You can contact the Building division at (760) 602-2717 / 2718 / 2719. Please provide your street address or the plan check number assigned when you submitted your plans.

I am only changing my water heater . Do I need a permit?

Yes. Although this type of work is a common occurrence, there are important safety elements that should be verified by the building inspector, as called out in the California Plumbing Code.

What is an “Owner-Builder” permit?

Just as the name indicates: the person owns the property and acts as their own general contractor on the job, and either does the work themselves or has employees (or licensed subcontractors) working on the project. The “Owner-Builder” assumes full responsibility for all phases of the project. If unlicensed contractors are used to do the work the Owner may be required to register as an employer with the State, provide Workers Compensation Insurance and ensure that all federal and state payroll taxes are paid. To verify the current status of a contractor’s license visit the [Contractors State License Board](#) web site.

Can the Building Dept. recommend an architect or contractor for my project?

No, the Building Division makes no recommendations. Referrals from friends, neighbors and co-workers can often point to local professionals who have successfully provided the services you require. [The Contractor’s State License Board](#), the [California Architects Board](#) and the [California Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors](#) can also be valuable tools in your research.

How do I schedule a building inspection?

To schedule an inspection please call our automated line, 760-602-2725 prior to **3:30 p.m.** Please note, the inspection will be scheduled for the next business day unless otherwise stated. If you need to speak to a clerical staff person regarding scheduling an inspection, please call 760-602-2700 during normal business hours.

What time will the inspector come and do I need to be present for my inspection?

Inspections occur from 8:00 am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. You can request a “morning” or “afternoon” inspection and we will do our best to accommodate your schedule. An adult must be present to allow the inspector access to the site. Special arrangements may be made by contacting the Building Division at 760-602-2700 between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. the day of the inspection.

What are the hours of construction?

Times and days allowed for construction are defined in the Carlsbad Municipal Code [\(CMC 8.48.010\)](#)

When will my permit expire?

Once your plan check is approved you will be issued a permit. This permit remains “active” if the work is commenced within 180 days from the issuance date and there has been a successful inspection by the building inspector. If work has not begun before this date or there has not been a successful inspection an extension of six months may be requested, in writing, prior to the expiration date. No fee will be charged at this time. If, however, the permit “expires” by exceeding 180 days without work having begun or without a successful inspection, the permit can be renewed by submitting a request in writing explaining the reason for the delay and paying ½ the original building fee. [\(CMC 18.04.030\)](#)

I am putting up a sign for my business. Do I need a permit?

Yes. You will need a permit from the Planning Division and possibly from the Building Division.

I am changing my electric service. Do I need a permit?

Yes, you will need a electric permit. You will also need to contact [SDG&E](#) to obtain a “Service Order Package” to insure that the proposed work complies with SDG&E’s standards and regulations. SDG&E will disconnect your utilities to enable your electrician to complete the project and will then reconnect them after the Building Inspector notifies them that the work has passed a final inspection.